



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: Indiana State Board of Education
From: Office of School Accountability
Date: May 23, 2023
Subject: Accreditation Petition for Liberty Academy of Columbus

This memorandum provides a summary of the information provided by the school in its petition for performance-based accreditation and the final recommendation from the Indiana Department of Education (Department) regarding the accreditation of Liberty Academy of Columbus (LAC).

Background & Demographic Information

Liberty Academy of Columbus will be a new school in Columbus, Indiana for the 2023-2024 school year and serve students in kindergarten through grade 7. The school will operate in person only.

LAC strives to “cultivate the minds and guide the hearts of young people through classical methods, with instruction in moral character and civic virtue. LAC is committed to a classical model of educational pedagogy with a focus on American values.”

LAC projects that it will enroll roughly 80 students in kindergarten through grade 7 during the 2023-2024 school year. The school intends to expand its student population to include grades 8-12 and further expand to increase overall enrollment to 200-215 students within six years.

Operations

Facilities: LAC will operate at 101 National Road, Columbus, Indiana. The school building will have a single entry and exit point for all foot traffic during the day, with buzz in double doors. The parking lot will have one way traffic flow, making traffic more predictable. The facility is under preparation for renovations and will be inspected once those renovations are completed.

Tuition: Annual tuition and fees for LAC is \$8,300. These costs include tuition, curriculum materials, a one-time enrollment fee and cost of uniforms. LAC indicated that it intends to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship program.

Staffing: JR Huff is the Head of School and will be running the daily operations of Liberty Academy of Columbus. He is a certified teacher and has eight years of experience teaching in multiple school districts.

LAC anticipates hiring nine other certified teachers. As of the time of application, LAC did not have any teachers on staff.



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Academic Programming

Students will be instructed in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, and history. Students will also receive elective instruction in physical education, music, and art. LAC will use the Hillsdale Classical Curriculum as the roadmap for their instruction, which aligns with the Indiana Academic Standards.

LAC will assess each student and use diagnostic assessment (NWEA MAP and reading) prior to school beginning, formative assessment done daily by classroom teachers, summative assessment at the end of a unit of study and normative assessments the end of each semester.

Department Recommendation

While LAC has not previously operated a school, their accreditation application reflects the research thought, and work needed to become a school. In addition, LAC has plans for steady reasonable growth for the future. Based on the submitted petition and accompanying materials, LAC has a fair understanding of the requirements of being an Indiana performance-based accredited school. Therefore, the Department recommends granting Liberty Academy of Columbus provisional state performance-based accreditation as a nonpublic school in Indiana.